

Meadow Glen Middle School student wins inaugural ‘Gator Apprentice’ contest

November 11, 2014 By Rachel Ham

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Instead of hearing “You’re fired” from Donald Trump, a Lexington School District One student heard “You’re hired” from a local business owner Monday morning.



Chick-fil-A franchise owner Britt Sims, left, and Meadow Glen Middle teacher Melody Shafer, right, congratulate Gator Apprentice winner Anna Klaes with a little help from the Chick-fil-A cow. (photo by Rachel Ham)

Meadow Glen Middle student Anna Klaes won the school's first ever “Gator Apprentice” and was awarded the grand prize of her first part-time job.

Meadow Glen Middle teachers Melody Shafer and Katie Hamilton put together the real-world skills contest over the summer and asked Britt Sims, franchise owner of Chick-fil-A at Saluda Pointe and West Columbia, if she to participate.

“We said let’s do it,” Sims said. “We are always looking for great talent and ways to pour into our kids.”

Klaes will go to work part time for Sims at Chick-fil-A when she turns 15.

Sixty students in Shafer’s iCivics class competed in Gator Apprentice by learning the ins and outs of job seeking from crafting a memorable application to impressing a potential employer during an interview. Shafer said getting feedback along the way should prove especially beneficial to the students when they do enter the workforce.

“This gives them a kickstart into looking for their first-ever job,” she said.

“These are skills they can take to any job,” Sims said.

Sims and her human resources team were involved in every step of the Gator Apprentice process. The top 10 students were selected for an initial round of interviews, and then the field was narrowed down to the top five.

“It was just like our regular hiring process,” Sims said.

Students went through another interview phase before a final three were chosen to job shadow at Chick-fil-A at Saluda Pointe.

“We saw how everything is made,” Klaes said.

The eighth-grader said she was surprised to hear her name called Monday but said she “worked really hard

Sims wants Chick-fil-A to continue being the business sponsor for the contest.

“We love working with our schools ... it’s an honor for us as a brand,” she said.

When asked about advice for next year’s Gator Apprentice contestants, Klaes said starting off strong is key.

“You should definitely work hard on your application,” she said.

Sunday, November 16, 2014	
12 – 3pm	International Girls Day Event
1 – 5pm	Dollar Sunday at Historic Columbia
2 – 7pm	For the Love of Paws
3pm	Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder
8pm	Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder

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